

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicants	Matthias Huber, <i>et al.</i>
Serial No. 10/	Filing Date: September 17, 2003
Title of Application:	Optical Instrument, in Particular an Endoscopic Instrument

Mail Stop Non-Fee Amendment
Commissioner for Patents
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Preliminary Amendment

Applicants herewith present its amendment and remarks. Please amend the claims and abstract as detailed below.

In the Claims

1. (currently amended) Optical instrument, in particular an endoscopic instrument, with a housing (4) in which at least one optical system (2) and a hygroscopic substance are inserted, and in which an eyepiece (6) is detachably secured to the housing (4) wherein the hygroscopic substance is imbedded in a moldable matrix material and the matrix material caulked with the hygroscopic substance can be inserted replaceably in the eyepiece (6).
2. (currently amended) Optical instrument according to claim 1, wherein the matrix material caulked with the hygroscopic substance is configured as an O-ring (9) that can be inserted into the eyepiece (6).
3. (currently amended) Optical instrument according to claim 1, wherein the matrix material caulked with the hygroscopic substance is configured as a cylindrical sheath (10) that can be inserted into the eyepiece (6).

4. (currently amended) Optical instrument according to ~~at least one of claims 1 to claim 3~~, wherein the moldable matrix material is elastic and penetrable to moisture when hardened.
5. (currently amended) Optical instrument according to ~~at least one of claims 1 to claim 4~~, wherein the moldable matrix material is an elastomer on a silicon and/or polyurethane base.
6. (currently amended) Optical instrument according to ~~at least one of claims 1 to claim 5~~, wherein the matrix material caulked with the hygroscopic substance can be produced by injection molding.
7. (currently amended) Optical instrument according to ~~at least one of claims 1 to claim 5~~, wherein the moisture coating of the hygroscopic substance can be optically identified.
8. Optical instrument according to claim 7, wherein the hygroscopic substance indicates the moisture coating by a difference in color.
9. (currently amended) Optical instrument according to ~~at least one of claims 1 to claim 8~~, wherein the hygroscopic substance is a silica gel or a porous ceramic.
10. (currently amended) Optical instrument according to ~~at least one of claims 1 to claim 8~~, wherein the hygroscopic substance consists of a mixture of various hygroscopic substances.